AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~A device for the visual analysis of test strips (12), each comprising at least one delimited area (13) in which, ~~—~~after contact with a sample to be examined, ~~—~~a visually detectable signal can be generated, with

a) a positioning device (21) comprising at least one seat for~~:~~

~~aa)~~ a test strip and/or

~~ab)~~ a test strip unit (11) consisting of a plurality of test strips (12) connected in a defined spatial arrangement; and

b) ~~and~~ an image generating device which graphically records at least one of the delimited areas (13) of a test strip arranged in a seat of the positioning device or of a test strip unit, and which transmits the recording result to an image analysis device,

c) with the image analysis device qualitatively and/or quantitatively analyzing the visually detectable signals for every test strip.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~A device according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the positioning device (21) is designed to be handled separately from the image generating device and to be arranged on the image generating device.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~A device according to claim 2, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the positioning device (21) and the image generating device are designed such that the positioning device can be reproducibly arranged in a defined arrangement on the image generating device.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the image generating device is a scanner.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the image analysis device consists of a computer with image processing software.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the positioning device (21) consists of a frame, and the seats (22) for the test strip units (11) or the test strips consist of cutouts in the frame (21).

7. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the seats (22) are designed for the latching acceptance of the test strip units (11) or test strips.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the positioning device (21) comprises at least two visually detectable position markers (23).

9. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to claim 8, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the image generating device graphically records the position markers (23) and transmits the recording result to the image analysis device which can localize and thus reproducibly detect the test strip units (11), the test strips (12) and/or the delimited areas (13) by means of the position markers (23).

10. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the test strip units (11) and/or the test strips comprise visually detectable, individualizing markings (14, 15).

11. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the individualizing markings (14, 15) are bar codes.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to claim 10 ~~or 11~~, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the image generating device graphically records the individualizing markings (14, 15) and transmits the recording result to the image analysis device which identifies the individual test strip units (11) and/or the test strips (12) on the basis of the individualizing markings (14, 15), and which uses the data codified in the markings for the analysis~~, if necessary~~.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the test strip units (11) and/or the test strips comprise at least two visually detectable position markers (16).

14. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to claim 13, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the image generating device graphically records the position markers (16) on the test strip units (11) and/or the test strips and transmits the recording result to the image analysis device which can localize and, thus, reproducibly detect the test strip units (11), the test strips (12) and/or the delimited areas (13) by means of the position markers (16).

15. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the positioning device (21) comprises a visually detectable gray scale (24) and/or a color scale (25).

16. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to claim 15, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the image generating device graphically records the gray scale (24) and/or the color scale (25) and transmits the recording result to the image analysis device which uses it for calibration of the analysis of the visually detectable signals on each test strip (12).

17. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the test strip unit (11) is designed such that the individual test strips (12) are arranged parallel to each other

and spaced apart from each other such that their lower sections can be simultaneously inserted into neighboring sample tubes of a tube row of an integrated sample tube system.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to claim 17, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the test strip unit (11) is designed such that a plurality of test strip units can be simultaneously inserted with their lower sections into different tube rows of an integrated sample tube system.

19. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the image analysis device performs a plausibility check, ~~by means of which will be checked~~checking whether

a test strip unit (11) or a test strip is arranged in all seats (22) of the positioning device (21); and/or

whether the individual test strip units (11) or test strips are arranged in a desired sequence in the seats of the positioning device (21); and/or

whether the test strip units (11) or test strips are from the same manufacturing batch; and/or

whether the best before date of the test strip units (11) or of the test strips is already reached.

20. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the image analysis device

determines~~,~~ ~~—~~ on the basis of the recording result transmitted by the image generating device~~,~~ ~~—~~the positions of the test strip units, the test strips and/or the delimited areas;

identifies the individual test strip units, test strips and/or the delimited areas; and

qualitatively and/or quantitatively analyzes ~~the~~ visually detectable signals for each test strip.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the image analysis device localizes and~~,~~ thus~~,~~ reproducibly detects the test strip units (12), the test strips and/or the delimited areas (13) by means of position markers (16, 23) arranged on the positioning device (21), the test strip units (11) and/or the test strips, and graphically recorded by the image generating device.

22. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to claim 20 ~~or 21~~, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the image analysis device identifies the individual test strip units (11), and/or the individual test strips by means of individualizing markings (14, 15) graphically recorded by the image generating device and arranged on the test strip units (11) and/or the test strips, and which uses the data codified in the markings (14, 15) for the analysis~~, if necessary~~.

23. (Currently Amended) ~~Device~~The device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein the image analysis device performs a plausibility check~~,~~ ~~by means of which will be checked~~checking whether

a test strip unit (11) or a test strip is arranged in all seats (22) of the positioning device (21); and/or

whether the individual test strip units (11) or test strips are arranged in a desired sequence in the seats (22) of the positioning device (21); and/or
whether the test strip units (11) or the test strips are from the same manufacturing batch; and/or
whether ~~the~~a best before date of the test strip units (11) or of the test strips is already reached.

24. (Currently Amended) ~~Positioning~~A positioning device for a device according to ~~any one of the preceding claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein ~~it~~the positioning device forms a surface graphically recordable by an image generating device and that ~~it~~the positioning device comprises seats for at least one test strip unit or at least one test strip.

25. (Currently Amended) ~~Positioning~~The positioning device according to claim 24, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the positioning device consists of a frame (21), and the seats for the test strip units (11) or the test strips consist of cutouts in the frame (21).

26. (Currently Amended) ~~Positioning~~ The positioning device according to claim ~~24 or~~ 25, ~~characterized in that~~wherein the seats (22) are designed for the latching acceptance of the test strip units (11) or test strips.

27. (Currently Amended) ~~Positioning~~The positioning device according to ~~any one of claims 24 to 26, characterized in that~~claim 24, wherein the positioning device (21) comprises at least two visually detectable position markers (23).

28. (Currently Amended) ~~Positioning~~The positioning device according to ~~any one of claims 24 to 27, characterized in that~~claim 24, wherein the positioning device (21) comprises a gray scale (24) and/or a color scale (25).

29. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~A method for the visual analysis of test strips comprising at least one delimited area (13) in which, ~~—~~after contact with a sample to be examined, ~~—~~a visually detectable signal can be generated, with at least one test strip or at least one test strip unit (11), ~~—~~consisting of a plurality of test strips (12) combined in a defined spatial arrangement, ~~—~~being arranged in a seat (22) of a positioning device (21), ~~—~~which can be arranged on an image generating device, ~~–~~ comprising the steps of:

~~such that the image generating device will be able to~~ graphically ~~record~~recording at least one of the delimited areas (13) of a test strip arranged in a seat of the positioning device or of a test strip unit, using the image generating device; and

~~and that~~transmitting the recording result ~~will be transmitted~~ to an image analysis device which determines the positions of the individual test strip units (11), test strips (12) and/or the delimited areas (13) and identifies them, and qualitatively and/or quantitatively ~~analyzes~~analyzing the visually detectable signal for each test strip (12).

30. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~The method according to claim 29, ~~characterized in that~~wherein position markers (16, 23), ~~—~~arranged on the positioning device (21), the test strip units (11) and/or the test strips, ~~—~~are graphically recorded by means of the image generating device, and that the recording result will be

transmitted to the image analysis device which can localize and thus reproducibly detect the test strip units (11), the test strips, and/or the delimited areas (13) by means of the position markers (16, 23).

31. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~The method according to claim 29 ~~or 30, characterized in that~~, wherein the image generating device graphically records individualizing markings (14, 15) arranged on the test strip units (11) and/or the test strips, and transmits the recording result to the image analysis device which identifies the individual test strip units (11) or the test strips (12) on the basis of the individualizing markings (14, 15), and which uses the data codified in the markings for the analysis~~, if necessary~~.

32. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~The method according to ~~any one of the claims~~claim 30, ~~to 32, characterized in that~~wherein the image generating device graphically records a gray scale (24) and/or a color scale (25) arranged on the positioning device (21) and transmits the recording result to the image analysis device which uses it as a calibration scale for the analysis of the visually detectable signals on each test strip (12).

33. – 40 (Cancelled)

41. (Currently Amended) ~~Stamping~~A stamping method for the production of a test strip unit ~~in which~~comprising the steps of:

placing a blank for a test strip unit (31) which ~~consists of~~comprises at least the material for ~~the~~an absorbable cut ~~is placed~~ onto a stamping plate (41); and

stamping at least the absorbable cut of the test strip unit ~~is stamped~~ out with a stamping tool (42), ~~**characterized in that**~~wherein the stamping plate (41) comprises a negative profile corresponding to the cut of the test strip unit (31) and that the blades of the stamping tool (42) used comprise a falling profile (43) which, ~~—~~during the stamping process, ~~—~~successively engages into the cutouts (44) of the negative profile of the stamping plate (41).